

# Policy for Placement Learning

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**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024**

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## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 One of the priorities in the University's vision and strategic plan is the commitment to offer students a 'distinctive set of opportunities [which] will allow our students to reach their full potential and optimise their employability'. Placement learning plays an important part in realising this ambition. This document sets out the University's Policy on placement learning.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Policy is to set out the principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery, and monitoring of placement learning, to ensure consistency of practice and experience across the University, and to ensure that high quality and standards are being maintained.

## 2.0 Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 The University defines placement learning as learning that is an integral part of a programme of study, which contributes to the programme's learning outcomes, and which normally takes place outside the University, either in the workplace or at another institution. This Policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students across the University.

- 2.2 Placements covered under this Policy usually fall into one of the following four main categories:
- **Academic:** a period of study at a university or comparable institution
  - **Work:** a period including industrial/professional experience, language assistantship, or teaching practice. Either relevant to a student's programme or for them to explore sectors outside their academic discipline(s)
  - **Research:** a project performed in a laboratory or equivalent
  - **Clinical:** work-related learning in a clinical setting, including optional (elective) periods
- 2.3 Placements may vary in length and take place during the normal teaching period, the vacations or both. A placement may be a continuous period e.g., a week or a full year, or extended over a period of time e.g., one day per week for a semester.
- 2.4 This Policy does not apply to fieldwork, work experience undertaken outside of a programme of study, including part-time, term-time or vacation work arranged by students that is not a planned part of the programme or does not contribute to its learning outcomes.
- 2.5 This Policy is accompanied by the [Guidance for Staff on Placement Learning](#).

## 3.0 General Principles

- 3.0.1 The University has a responsibility towards its students undertaking placements and will take reasonable steps to ensure and evidence that appropriate action has been taken to mitigate risks and that students are adequately supported before, during and after their placement.
- 3.0.2 Each School that sends students on placement must make adequate staffing provision for the roles of administrative Placement Coordinator (Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Coordinator (Placements) and academic placements lead. Staff in these roles must have sufficient experience, time and support to fulfil their responsibilities. These roles should normally include: risk assessment and approval of placements, ensuring that students are prepared before undertaking a placement, maintaining communication with and support for students throughout the placement, and ensuring that arrangements are in place to re-orientate students on their return to the University.<sup>1</sup> Some of the predeparture activities are supported via central professional services.

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<sup>1</sup> This may be different for international placements. Please see more information here: [International placements \(The University of Manchester\)](#) .

- 3.0.3 All new programmes that include a compulsory or optional credit bearing or non-credit bearing placement must be approved as part of the New Programme Approval (NPP) procedure. Where placements are added to an existing programme, these must be approved by the relevant Faculty using Programme Amendment procedures.
- 3.0.4 Marks (including a pass/fail) may be assigned to placements and may contribute to progression and/or the final degree classification. Placements may also contribute towards credit.
- 3.0.5. Placement Providers must be able to offer a placement that meets the agreed aims and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes and where appropriate meet any necessary requirements of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
- 3.0.6. For professional recognition of the award, including a "license to practice", successful completion of the placement(s) is required.
- 3.0.7. In case of a breakdown of a placement, either by the Placement Provider or the student, the School that manages the placement must always provide adequate support for the students' continuation of their studies as appropriate.
- 3.0.8. Schools should consider the ongoing appropriateness and effectiveness of providing placements through timely and regular review using student feedback mechanisms to inform this.

### **3.1 Organising a Placement**

- 3.1.1 Placements are organised by the University or, with the agreement of the University, the student.
- 3.1.2 In their choice of placement provider and location, Schools should adhere to the University's values of humanity which state we will "embrace and celebrate difference, respect and support each other, and act with integrity to benefit society and the environment by transforming and enriching lives." If the Placement Organiser is unclear about whether a placement fits with the University's values, they can get further guidance from their Head of School.
- 3.1.3 Where students are undertaking a work placement, all responsibilities of the School (or office within the University) that manages the placement, the Placement Provider, and the student must be made explicit in advance of the placement and clear guidance must be available to all those involved about the various phases of placement learning. An agreement must be used to set down the responsibilities of the respective parties

and other details about the placement, and the document must be shared between the School, the Placement Provider and the student.

- 3.1.4 For students with disclosed disabilities and/or special educational needs, the student's home School has the responsibility (with support from the DASS) to work with the student and to ensure that any reasonable adjustments are put in place to enable the student to succeed on placement. Should the student be prevented from undertaking the standard placement, and where this forms a compulsory part of the programme, reasonable alternative learning experiences which achieve broadly the same intended outcomes must be provided by the School, subject to any alternative direction provided by PSRBs.

## 3.2 Additional Costs on Placement

- 3.2.1. Wherever possible, placements should be paid. Where unpaid placements exist, students' expenses should normally be covered by the placement provider. However, this does not apply to placements for a not-for-profit organisation, that are clearly classed as volunteering.
- 3.2.2 Where undertaking a placement forms a compulsory part of the programme and involves additional costs to students, over and above the normal fees for the programme, this must be made clear at application stage and to current students in all promotional materials.
- 3.2.3 Further details about additional costs can be found in the [Policy for Additional Costs](#).

## 4.0 Monitoring Compliance

- 4.1 Adherence against this document is expected and should be monitored by Heads of Schools (or their delegates) as part of a wider quality assurance process which supports the Annual Academic Assurance Process including, Schools, Faculties, Teaching and Learning Strategy Group, the Academic Quality Sub-Committee for Teaching, Learning and Students, and Senate.
- 4.2 For HESA purposes, the University is required to record all placement data lasting four weeks or more in Campus Solutions or My Placement. In addition, for duty of care/emergency management purposes, all activity undertaken off-campus that extends beyond 48 hours needs to be recorded in Campus Solutions or My Placement.

## 5.0 Supporting documents and sources of support

- 5.0.1 The *Guidance for Staff on Placement Learning* supplements this Policy and is available on the [Teaching and Learning Delivery website](#).
- 5.0.2 The guidance for students is available on the University's placements website: [For students: Do a placement \(The University of Manchester\)](#).
- 5.0.3 The guidance for New Programme Approval (NPP) is available on the Teaching and Learning Delivery website: [New programme approval | Teaching and Learning Delivery | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)
- 5.0.4 More information about the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) can be found on their website: [Disability Advisory and Support Service \(The University of Manchester\)](#)

Version amendment history box and Document control box

Version amendment history: Policy for Placement Learning		
Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	June 2021	Creation by International Programmes Office and approval by TLSCG: Replaced version 2.3 of 'Principles and procedures for student placements on taught programmes'
1.0	February 2022	Policy owner and lead contact details updated in Document control box; reference to TLSD changed to Teaching and Learning Delivery in 4.1.
1.1	June 2024	Review by AQSC: Added to new student-friendly template and minor changes to style and tone.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	<b>Policy for Placement Learning</b>
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Supersedes:	1.0
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Next review date:	July 2028

Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	N/A
Related Policies:	Policy on Additional Costs for Taught Programmes
Related Procedures and Guidance:	Guidance for staff on Placement Learning
Policy owner:	Head of Student and Academic Services (SAS)
Lead contact:	Teaching and Learning Officer (Policy and Procedures)

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